

Home Prayers *for Little Children*



HOW SHALL WE START?

HELPFUL PAMPHLETS

Worship in the Home

by Frederic and Katharine Lawrence

5¢ single copy, \$4.50 per 100

Sponsors in Baptism

I Have a Child to be Baptized

A Letter to a Son

Why Baptize Children?

\$2.00 per 100 copies

How Did You Learn to Speak?

How did you begin to learn the English Language? It was not just begun when you started to struggle with the difficulties of grammar and composition. You began to learn English when your mother talked to you as she fed you or dressed you or played with you. At first you did not understand what she said, but the sound of her voice was reassuring and comforting and very gradually you began to distinguish words and associate them with ideas. A baby understands long before he can express himself. So it is with prayer.

If a baby's parents will say a little prayer or, perhaps better still, sing a simple hymn such as "Jesus, tender

Prayer by the Crib

Shepherd, hear me," at the baby's crib every evening at the same time, the baby will soon look for that experience and enjoy it and gradually try to join in by cooing or waving his hands and later he will know the tune and then the words. When other prayers have been added and when the child learns that his parents have been talking to

God in their own words as well, he will imitate in this as in all other things.

Early Thoughts of God

To a young child God seems familiar. The best religious training we can give our children is to have them grow up knowing that He is familiar to *us*, and that He is our guide as we ask our children to do, not our will, but His.

Prayer time should be a time of pleasure right along. A story such as those simple Bible tales by Mary Entwistle is a good way to get into the right atmosphere for prayer. Giving thanks for the pleasures of the day seems to be the most natural form of prayer at first. Next comes prayer for help or comfort for others — "Help the poor children who are hungry," — "Bless Mary and make her well." Then come the "sorry" prayers for wrong things the child has done during the day; these should come without suggestion from a parent. Such prayers will greatly relieve a troubled conscience at bedtime. Let us always have a few moments, very brief at first, of quiet in which we can listen to God. A young child will find this natural and may surprise us by telling the thoughts God has sent to him.

A Treat, Not a Task

When all of your children are under eight years old, they can join in prayers suitable for all present. If some of the children are older, it would be better to choose prayers and stories suitable for the older ones rather than have them feel that prayers are babyish. Separate prayers can still be held with the younger ones at bedtime.

Family Prayers

PRAYERS

THE following prayers in verse are a few that some children have liked and learned. No prayer that is learned, however, can take the place of a prayer in the child's own words, no matter how simple or crude.

Morning Prayer

Father, we thank Thee for the night,
And for the pleasant morning light,
For health and food and loving care,
And all that makes the world so fair.

Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good,
In all we do in work or play,
To grow more loving every day. Amen.

Morning

Lord Jesus, I thank thee for a good sleep and a new day.
Help me to be good. Bless my father and mother, and,
and watch over all of us today. Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father, help us to please thee today, and to
love thee more and more; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Help me, O God,
To bring joy and love
And happiness to everyone. Amen.

Dear God, please help me say
Kind words to everyone today;
Dear God, please help me play
With all my friends in a happy way. Amen.

Evening

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
Thy love be with me through the night
And wake me with the morning light. Amen.

Dear God, I've had a happy day,
With food and loving care and play,
And now the day is done;
Bless every little child of Thine,
May their days be as glad as mine;
Dear God, bless everyone. Amen.

Evening

Good Night Prayer for a Little Child

HENRY JOHNSTONE

Father, unto Thee I pray,
Thou hast guarded me all day;
Safe I am while in Thy sight,
Safely let me sleep tonight.

Bless my friends, the whole world bless,
Help me to learn helpfulness;
Keep me ever in Thy sight;
So to all I say good night.

(From "Prayers and Graces for Small Children")

I've had a very happy day,
Just full of fun and lots of play;
But now I'm such a sleepy head,
I thank Thee for my little bed.

(From "Baby's Prayer at Twilight")

Good Night

I'm tired and sleepy and
tucked in my bed.

My teeth have been brushed and
my prayers have been said.

Good night, God,
Good night!
Good night!

(From "Baby's Prayer at Twilight")

Evening

Jesus, tender shepherd, hear me,
Bless thy little lamb tonight,
Through the darkness be Thou near me,
Keep me safe till morning light.

All this day thy hand has led me,
And I thank Thee for thy care,
Thou hast warmed me, clothed and fed me,
Listened to my evening prayer.

Let my sins be all forgiven;
Bless the friends I love so well:
Take us all at last to heaven,
Happy there with thee to dwell. Amen.

Thank You

We thank you, God, for all kind people,
For fathers and mothers, who take care of us,
For milkmen and delivery men, who bring us food and
other things,
For carpenters and painters and plumbers and all other
workers who help us,
For firemen and policemen, who protect our homes;
We thank you, dear God, for all kind people. Amen.

Father, We Thank Thee

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

For flowers that bloom about our feet,
Father, we thank Thee,
For tender grass so fresh and sweet,
Father, we thank Thee,
For the song of bird and hum of bee,
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For blue of stream and blue of sky,
Father, we thank Thee,
For pleasant shade of branches high,
Father, we thank Thee,
For fragrant air and cooling breeze,
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For this new morning with its light,
Father, we thank Thee,
For rest and shelter of the night,
Father, we thank Thee,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

(From "Prayers for Children")

Thank You

A Great Gray Elephant

A great gray elephant,
A little yellow bee,
A tiny purple violet,
A tall green tree,
A red and white sailboat
On a blue sea —
All these things
You gave me,
When you made
My eyes to see —

Thank you, God!

(From "Prayers for Children")

Thank You, God

LEAH GALE

God made the sun
And God made the tree,
God made the mountains,
And God made me.

I thank you, O God,
For the sun and the tree,
For making the mountains
And for making me.

(From "Prayers for Children")

Nice New Clothes

Dear Lord, I thank Thee for my clothes,
No matter how the cold wind blows,
In the sunshine or the storm,
My nice new clothes will keep me warm.

If it should rain or hail or snow,
I'm snug and warm where'er I go.
My blouse is clean, my clothes are pressed.
It's, oh, so nice to be well dressed.

And when I walk upon the street,
I'm glad my shoes are bright and neat.
But, oh, dear Lord, teach me to share
The food I eat and clothes I wear.

(From "Baby's Prayer at Twilight")

The child and parent can say this in alternate lines:

For the light for my work and play,
Thank You, Heavenly Father.

For the dark for my sleep,
Thank You, Heavenly Father.

For all my friends who care for me,
Thank You, Heavenly Father.

For all the animals who play with me,
Thank You, Heavenly Father.

For all your love by night and day,
Thank You, Heavenly Father. Amen.

Other Prayers

Prayer for Help

Help me to work,
Help me to play,
Help me to learn
A bit each day.

Teach me to dress,
Teach me to scrub,
To hang my clothes
And clean my tub.

To keep my toys
Upon the shelf,
Help me, dear Lord,
To help myself.

(From "Baby's Prayer at Twilight")

Guidance

When I fall
I will call!
And know that You
will hear me.
Where'er I go
I will know
Loving hands
are near me.

I will pray
every day
That You will
ever guide me.
I can smile
all the while
With You here
beside me.

(From "Baby's Prayer at Twilight")

Jesus, Holy Baby in the manger,
Help me to be like You.

Jesus, Heavenly Boy in the workshop,
Help me to be like You.
Jesus, strong, kind and brave,
Help me to be like You.

Jesus, lover of all beautiful things,
Help me to be like You.
Jesus, Friend of all the world,
Help me to be like You. Amen.

GRACE AT MEALS

THE use of the words of a prayer without regard to their meaning may be avoided by changing the grace from time to time; by having a special grace for use on Sunday or occasions of thanksgiving; by varying the manner, as in repeating the words in unison, or members of the family reciting in turn. The grace may be as simple as the family desires, but it should be shared by the children. The grace need not be restricted to thanksgiving for food, but may well include thanksgiving for appreciated events of the day.

God is loving, God is good,
And we thank Him for our food. Amen.

Grace

Thank you, God,
For milk and bread
And other things so good.
Thank you, God,
For those who help
To grow and cook my food. Amen.

Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you, God, for everything. Amen.

(From "A Child's Grace")

All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord,
For all His love. Amen.

(Can be sung. See Hymn 138, the 1940 Hymnal)

Father, bless the food we take
And bless us all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

(From "Prayers and Graces for Small Children")

GOING TO CHURCH

YOUR child will be able to begin his Church School in most places at the age of four or five. Some parishes will have a nursery group for three-year-olds, perhaps during the Church hour. You can help your child by going with him to special services for children and taking him into the Church building sometimes when there is no service being held. Kneel down for a moment with your child. You may say a prayer or simply appreciate the quiet of God's house. You may show him the font where he was baptized, or a window that tells a story. Your child will enjoy this experience and it is a part of his early Christian training. He will absorb more of the beauty and meaning of the holy place than you realize.

*Additional copies may be obtained from the
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE
1 JOY STREET, BOSTON 8, MASSACHUSETTS*